

FREDERICK STRANGE.

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(Plate x.)

John Gould, John Gilbert, John Macgillivray, and Frederick Strange were naturalists to whom we owe a large amount of our knowledge of the animal and bird life of the eastern districts of Australia during the early days of the colonisation of New South Wales and Queensland. The account which follows is intended as a contribution towards our knowledge of the work of Strange, who was undoubtedly one of Australia's great pioneer naturalists.

Frederick Strange died a tragic death in 1854 whilst still a young man, leaving a wife and young family in Sydney, many miles from his home country. In 1854 it was still a long, long journey to Australia, where scientific institutions were few and far between and, as most of his collections in natural history had gone to England, his attainments as a naturalist were better known there than in the country of his adoption.

To those reasons may be due the fact that no account worthy of the extent and results of his pioneer work in natural history in Australia and New Zealand has so far been published.

Mammalogy, ornithology, entomology, conchology, and botany are all in his debt for the work he did in first bringing to knowledge many items in those sections of natural history. Possibly, too, it is due to the wideness of his activities that no specialist in any one of those sections has honoured his memory by writing an adequate account of his labours.

True, some attempt to do justice to Strange's efforts occurred when a pamphlet entitled "Literary Notices of the late Frederick Strange, Naturalist," was published. The author (1) and date of publication are unknown, but from information contained in it the pamphlet must have been printed after November, 1865, as there is an article by Gerhard Krefft on the Yellow-footed Wallaby, *Petrogale xanthopus*, which mentions specimens collected in the Flinders Range by George Masters, who collected there in November, 1865.

In this pamphlet, of which there appears to be only one known copy, is reprinted, from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, an editorial article of 1852 intimating that the naturalist was about to visit England, together with an account of him, which appeared in the British press on his arrival in London. "Notes on the Brush Birds of Australia," by Strange, are reprinted from the *Moreton Bay Courier*, and an account he wrote in the *Sydney*

(1) Frederick Strange married Rosa Prince. In 1856 (see *post*) her address was c/o Mr. Charles Prince, Herald Office, Hunter Street, Sydney. In the *Sydney Directory* of 1855, Charles Prince is recorded as residing at Princes Street, occupation, compositor. We may, therefore, assume that the pamphlet was set up as a private effort by Charles Prince, who was probably father or brother to Mrs. Strange.

Morning Herald of a trip inland he made in New Zealand. Details of the tragic ending of the naturalist are reprinted from various Australian newspapers and, as already mentioned, there is an account by Krefft of the Yellow-footed Wallaby.

Except for this pamphlet, the only biographical notes published have been those in the short account by J. H. Maiden in his article, "Records of Australian Botanists," which appeared in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales* in 1908.

Maiden's information appears to have been limited to that contained in the pamphlet, and any casual references to Strange that have since appeared have been confined to the contents of Maiden's article (2).

Maiden wrote of Strange as a botanical collector. Iredale and Hedley have made mention of him as a conchologist.

Strange was the first to make several Australian mammals known to science, and still more Australian and New Zealand birds, yet it is a curious fact that, although many items in conchology and botany have been scientifically named after him, his memory has never been honoured in the name of a mammal or of a bird.

Even that famous keeper of the bird collection in the British Museum, Robert Bowdler Sharpe, who joined that institution in 1872 and was acquainted with John Gould, was unable, when writing the history of the collection of birds, to record information about Frederick Strange. Many of the bird skins collected by Strange reached the British Museum in the Gould collection, but all that Bowdler Sharpe could place on record about the collector was: "Collected in New Zealand and Australia, and made beautiful skins. I have not been able to find out any records of his career, but I can remember that Mr. Gould always spoke of him with high appreciation as a collector."

For the purpose of this biography much more material than was available to Maiden has been used, since Frederick Strange's grandson, Mr. C. R. Strange, of Sydney, has submitted some of his grandfather's correspondence and has also supplied a note-book, entitled, "Catalogue of Mammalia and Birds of Australia," belonging to Frederick Strange, in which the naturalist entered field-notes on birds he collected in the neighbourhood of Moreton Bay and elsewhere. In the account which follows this note-book will be referred to as the "Catalogue." (3).

Extensive research in contemporary manuscripts and printed literature has furnished much additional information.

BIRTH-PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH.

When Frederick Strange arrived in London from Sydney in 1852, with a consignment of natural history specimens, the newspaper *London Morning Advertiser* gave an account regarding him in its issue of June 24 of that year. In that article Strange was described as a native of Aylsham in

(2) Maiden published a photograph reproduced on plate x.

(3) From internal evidence it is apparent that this *Catalogue* was compiled before March 1, 1848.

Norfolk. Aylsham is about 11 miles north of Norwich (4), and about nine miles from the coast. When in New Zealand, in 1849, Strange named a mountain, Mount Stanley, after the Bishop of Norwich, Dr. Edward Stanley (1779-1849, father of the explorer, Capt. Owen Stanley, R.N.); and when he arrived in England in 1852, Strange proceeded to Norfolk, as is witnessed by an agreement drawn up in Norwich on September 17, 1852 (see *post*). The *Norwich Mercury* of June 26, 1852, printed the notice appearing in the *London Morning Advertiser* of two days previously, and in the documents in possession of Mr. C. R. Strange are letters to Strange from J. H. Gurney, the Norwich ornithologist, and from Trivet Allcock, also of Norwich.

It should also be noted that Strange called his house in Sydney "Norfolk Cottage."

The writer has gone to some pains in an endeavour to ascertain the date of birth of Strange. The parish registers of Aylsham, which date from 1653, have been searched, but there is no Strange entry between the years 1810-1818. A search among the large accumulated records and indexes of the Society of Genealogists of London has been equally unavailing in a search covering the county of Norfolk generally. Strange is a very ancient Norfolk name—appearing as Le Strange, etc.—but it seems to be very rare indeed in Norfolk records from the 18th and 19th centuries onwards. The secretary to the Society has kindly gone to considerable trouble in an effort to trace the year of Strange's birth, but without success. Maiden, in his *Records of Australian Botanists*, gave the date as "1826," but this, as will later appear obvious, is certainly incorrect.

EMIGRATION TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

The notice in the *London Morning Advertiser* states that "previous to the final adoption of his home in the new world," Strange "embarked in the third vessel which left the shores of England, in order to the formation of a new settlement in South Australia, where he remained 12 months prosecuting his labours in natural history, botany, and in acquiring information relating to the resources of the colony. (5) The *Cygnets* was the third vessel to leave England for South Australia, and it was a Colonisation Commissioner's ship, containing portion of the survey staff. Kingston, the Deputy Surveyor-General, was on this ship which left England on March 20, 1836, and arrived in South Australia on September 11 with 84 passengers.

H. A. D. Opie, in his *South Australian Records prior to 1841*, gives a list of the passengers by the *Cygnets*, but there is no record of Strange, nor does the name occur in any of the available lists of passengers on ships coming to Adelaide at this period. In view of the fact that Strange was engaged in fishing enterprise early in his South Australian career, if he did travel on the *Cygnets*, it is possible that he served as a member of the crew. He certainly had sea-faring knowledge, as later, when he went farther east to New South Wales, he was mate of a vessel, the *Tamar*. The

(4) In June, 1920, Mr. Tom Iredale saw in the Norwich Museum, Norfolk, *Psephotus pulcherrimus* from Moreton Bay, presented by Thos. Strange.—Ed.

(5) This is incorrect. Strange was in South Australia for about four years.

statement that Strange came to South Australia in the third vessel to arrive in that colony—the *Cygnets*—should be noted in conjunction with the fact that later he accompanied Charles Sturt and other surveyors in some surveys. It is possible that Strange became acquainted with officers of the Survey Department during the voyage of the *Cygnets*.

While time may furnish more information as to the beginnings of Strange's Australian career, we have a very definite record of him on July 14, 1838. In the documents in possession of Mr. C. R. Strange there is one under the signature of J. Hindmarsh, Governor of South Australia, written at Adelaide on that date:—

“I certify that I have known Frederick Strange for the last six months, during which period his sobriety, honesty, and good conduct have been uniformly good and steady.”

Strange, therefore, must have come under the notice of Governor Hindmarsh as early as January, 1838, or about 15 months after his (Strange's) first arrival in the colony, if he did reach the colony in the *Cygnets*.

We get certain information about Strange's movements in South Australia from the operations of some large investors or speculators. Also from a land transaction, which was to involve the then Colonial Secretary, George Milner Stephen, in a somewhat notorious and unsavoury case, and to lead to the resignation of his office and withdrawal from the colony. This refers to the episode of the “Milner Estate,” in the first transactions regarding which Strange was involved.

Captain Charles Sturt spent September 26 to 30, 1838, in examining the country at the mouth of the Gawler River on behalf of the South Australian company and was accompanied by Frederick Strange.

Miss Gwenneth Williams, in *South Australian Exploration to 1856* (Public Library, Adelaide, 1919), states (page 37): “Early in the following year [1839] Mr. [T. Bowes] Strangways made another trip in this vicinity, when with Messrs. G. M. Stephen and [W.] Nation he left Adelaide in search of rich country. Crossing the Lower Para they reached the Gawler River just below its junction with the Upper Para; then as they followed the stream fertile alluvial plains were discovered covering in extent hundreds of acres. The party now came upon a salt water creek, which was named after Strange, their attendant, who had discovered it two years previously when engaged as a fisherman. So promising was the neighbouring district that Mr. Stephens obtained a Special Survey.”

Writing in the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* of March 2, 1839 (6), Stephens said: “. . . we came upon a salt water creek, flowing into the Gulf (St. Vincent's) and which His Excellency Colonel Gawler has permitted me to name “Strange's Creek” after my attendant who led us to it, and discovered it about two years ago in a boat when a fisherman. I should mention that at about three miles from the outlet of the Gawler, Strange recognised the spot as the place to which he had accompanied Capt. Sturt last year (1838), and which the latter had described to the South Australian company and strongly recommended for a special survey; but

(6) Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), New South Wales (of which Victoria was a part) and South Australia.

which the manager did not inspect, or it would not have been my good fortune to possess it.

"We were tired, and therefore did not proceed far up the salt water inlet, being satisfied that large boats could discharge cargo upon the alluvial flat itself, but at all events upon dry land, and trusting to Strange's description of its entrance and short course from the Gulf. That description is abundantly confirmed by the written report of Captain Sturt to the company. Strange informed us that the creek so abounds with fish that, to use his own graphic description, 'the boat actually laid upon their backs,' and his last haul in it before he became a landsman amounted to 99 dozen, which he sold to other fishermen at Port Adelaide for £13 odd. Upon my return to town I took a Special Survey (February 20, 1839) in this spot from the mouth of the inlet up the bank of the Gawler as far as the water extends." (7).

Here we have the information that Strange, early in his South Australian career, was engaged in fishing enterprise in St. Vincent's Gulf, and before or about March, 1837, had gone as far north as the mouth of the Gawler River. Next we learn that Strange had accompanied Sturt when the latter surveyed the land at the mouth of the river, between September 26 and 30, 1838, and that he again went to that locality with Strangways early in 1839.

A portion of a mutilated letter among the "Strange" papers would suggest that Strange did more than just accompany Stephen when the latter went to inspect the land with a view to applying for a Special Survey. It is possible that it was Strange who first brought the suggestion forward to Stephen that the latter should acquire the land. The mutilated letter unfortunately bears no date, and the signature has gone, but it was undoubtedly written by Stephen, as it is endorsed "Colonial Secretary," and was probably written shortly after February 20, 1839, the date on which the Special Survey was claimed. It will be noticed that the letter was addressed to Strange, care of John MacLaren, who was a Government surveyor, and that Stephen (8) says he would request a week's leave for Strange. This would indicate that Strange was, when the letter was written, in the employment of the Survey Department.

(Addressed) Frederick Strange, care of Jno. MacLaren, Esq.

(Franked) Colonial Secretary.

"You will see by the newspapers, Strange, that I have taken a Special Survey of the fine place we have just seen. The Creek the Governor has allowed me to call after you 'Strange's Creek.' Being anxious to reward your services during my late excursion in a manner which I believe will be gratifying to you, I have only to say that on the other side of this sheet I have sent you an I.O.U. for £50, which you can have at any time or in any sums from time to time as you please. I have also in readiness for you an excellent Second-hand Double-barrelled Gun instru-

(7) In his *Catalogue* Strange recorded that he shot the Masked Wood-Swallow, *Artamus personatus*, in "1839, and then I shot it on the Gawler River in South Australia."

(8) Stephen's diary, November, 1838, to February, 1839, is in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, but I am informed by Miss Leeson it contains no mention of Strange.

mentability. I now send an express Messenger for you to come up to Emu to-night, if possible, in order to accompany Mrs. Lindsay and Mrs. Stevenson in a boat to-morrow afternoon to the Creek; for which purpose I shall request for you a week's leave of absence. But I shall be glad to have you entirely as my property with Mrs. Lindsay until we go home together, two or three months' time; and I will in the meantime give you the same first few days of your arrival Mrs. Lindsay you will be to pilot them about. I hope to place you upon Farm there by and bye as soon as established a town. You can therefore either resign situation or ask for the leave of a you please; but of course you will

I am your friend,

(Signature gone)."

Regarding *Malurus melanotus*, Gould wrote in his *Handbook* (Vol. I, 322): "The belts of the Murray in South Australia were the only places in which I observed this species. . . . The period of my visit was in winter; specimens I collected were all out of colour, or, more properly speaking, divested of the rich blue and black plumage, in which state a single specimen was afterwards forwarded to me by one of the party that accompanied His Excellency Colonel Gawler and Captain Sturt, when those gentlemen visited the Murray in 1839." Strange accompanied Gawler on the occasion referred to by Gould, and in his *Catalogue*, Strange entered "Belts of M.(urray) F. Strange" in the column "S.A." against *Malurus melanotus*. It is possible that Strange was with Gould when the original specimen was taken, and that he had a commission to obtain for Gould further specimens at the first opportunity which was to come when he accompanied Sturt on the disastrous visit in the following November-December. It was, however, probably before that trip that Strange visited the country between the Coorong and Lake Albert. That he did visit that portion of South Australia is apparent from records of mammals collected by him. In August, 1839, one Malcolm applied for a Special Survey of a tract of country lying on the eastern shores of Lakes Alexandrina and Albert, and it is possible that Strange was engaged as one of the party carrying out the survey and collected then the animals he sent to Gould. (See *S.A. Nat.*, 23, 1946, 11-13.) On his return from this survey duty Strange proceeded on the expedition which is referred to as follows in the *London Morning Advertiser*:—

" . . . In the latter end of this year, 1839, he was engaged upon an expedition with Captain Sturt and Commander Pullen . . . to explore the country north of the north-west angle of the Murray, during which the entire party nearly perished, being compelled to bleed their horses to quench their thirst on account of the entire absence of water." The catastrophe, while bad enough, was not so bad as pictured by the London paper. This was the expedition undertaken by Governor Gawler, with Captain Sturt and Lieut. W. J. S. Pullen, when it was proposed to cross Lake Alexandrina from Currency Creek (near the present town of Coolwa), proceed up the Murray to the Great Bend (later known as the North-west Bend), where

the town of Morgan is now situated, and thence return overland to Adelaide. It was to result in the death of Bryan, one of the party. (9).

Governor Gawler records that he sent out several parties of those who had remained at the camp to search for Bryan, and Strange was one of these. In her diary (10), Julia Gawler, under date December 15, at North-west Bend, wrote: ". . . at 6, Arthur (11), Mr. Pullen and Bob (12) went down the river on horseback, and a boat went down with six sailors to look for him, but returned without him. Arthur, Strange, and Bob set off up the country at 6 o'clock in the evening. December 16: Arthur returned without Mr. B. at 8 o'clock . . . at 8 o'clock p.m. . . . Strange, Craig and Richardson set off by land."

Captain Sturt in his report, published in the *South Australian Register*, (13), said: ". . . Richardson, Strange and Craig walked along the main road. . . ."

On December 21 camp was broken and the party reached Adelaide on December 28.

SETTLEMENT IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

When or why Strange left South Australia is not known, but his *Catalogue* contains a note that he collected a specimen of *Pedionomus torquatus* in New South Wales in 1840. In the *Introduction to the Birds of Australia*, 1848, Gould wrote: "Independently of the plains of South Australia, formerly given as the restricted habitat of this species, I have lately received a letter from Mr. Strange, of Sydney, in which he states a female had been procured in the neighbourhood of Botany Bay. I am also in possession of an egg of this bird. . . ." Gould is more explicit in his *Handbook*, 1865, regarding the egg, when he wrote: "Strange sent me a fully developed egg of this bird which he took from the ovarium of a female. . . ." (See Whittell, *Emu*, 45, 1946, 328-329.)

Mr. C. R. Strange has a copy of *The English Version of the Polyglott Bible*, on the frontispiece of which is endorsed "From Frederick Strange to Rosa Prince, 1840." When or where the marriage took place is not known, but the baptisms of their children are entered within the front cover. These domestic occurrences will be referred to again later in their chronological order, but at the moment it should be mentioned that the first entry records the baptism of a son, George William, on December 10, 1841. Among the "Strange" papers is a burial certificate of this child showing that he was born at Gosford, New South Wales, on November 23, 1841, and buried at Gosford on October 20, 1842.

In the burial register Strange is recorded as "mate of the *Tamar* steamer," so it would appear that he had left South Australia to take up a

(9) The full text of Colonel Gawler's despatch to the Colonisation Commissioners for South Australia on this journey was given by V. M. Newland as a supplement to his Presidential Address before the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia on October 29, 1937. See *Proceedings for the Session*, 1936-37.

(10) MSS. in Archives Department, Public Library, Adelaide.

(11) Arthur D. Gell, Private Secretary to Governor Gawler.

(12) An Encounter Bay native employed as an interpreter.

(13) January 4, 1840, page 4.

seafaring life. By May 27, 1843, he had, however, moved to Sydney, as a son, Thomas Frederick (later to be the well-known New South Wales oarsman and sculler), was baptised there on that date. Strange commenced business as a collector of natural history specimens; the *Sydney Morning Herald* for 1844 contains several notices of his activities in collecting. The issue of April 20 records that: "Mr. Strange, of Princes Street, who is not unknown as a successful collector of specimens of natural history, returned this week from a week's collecting excursion up the Hunter. One of the chief curiosities he has brought with him is an enormous diamond snake, 11 ft. one inch in length. Mr. Strange walked close to this snake within five minutes of his landing on Musquito Island. . . . On opening it, Mr. Strange found in its stomach a paddy melon, a species of wallaby, fully two feet long. . . . Both snake and paddy melon are about to undergo the process of stuffing for exportation to England. In four days (the remainder of the week was too wet to go out), Mr. Strange has collected more than three dozen of various species of wallaby, besides a number of paddy melons; also a beautiful variety of birds and insects."

The *Herald* of August 23 gives a list of passengers arrived by the *Maitland* steamer from Port Macquarie. The list includes the name of "Mr. Strange," while the issue of September 7 shows, in the list of cargo by the barge *Haidee*, for London, one box of specimens, natural history, F. Strange.

MEETING WITH JOHN GILBERT AND JOHN MACGILLIVRAY.

When John Gilbert, on his second visit to Australia, reached Sydney at the end of January, 1844, there occurred a very interesting gathering of naturalist-collectors. Strange was then in Sydney, John Macgillivray was with H.M.S. *Fly*, and Dr. George Bennett was still there.

Mr. A. H. Chisholm, in *Strange New World*, has given the movements of John Gilbert in New South Wales, in 1844, and has published what he described as the last known letter written by him. The letter, published by Chisholm, was addressed by Gilbert to Dr. Bennett, and was dated from Darling Downs on September 10, 1844. But among the correspondence furnished by Mr. C. R. Strange is a still later letter addressed by Gilbert to Frederick Strange from Darling Downs on September 16. The letter is as follows:—

Darling Downs,
Sept. 16, 1844.

Dear Sir,—

I have packed up a small collection for Mr. Gould, and you would oblige me very much by sending them off by the first, and post the enclosed letter by the same vessel, the reason of my sending so small a collection is that I have determined on joining Dr. Leichhardt's overland expedition; would you not like to go? I am sure you will agree with me that such an opportunity of collecting the treasures of the interior should not be lost sight of.

I only received your letter of the 17th July (14) a few days ago, and of

(14) This was doubtless the letter referred to by Gilbert in his letter from Darling Downs of September 10, 1844, to Dr. George Bennett. Gilbert wrote: "I received a letter from Mr. Strange a few days ago, in which he states there are no letters from Mr. Gould." See *Emu*, 38, 1938, 147.

course have not yet received my boxes you have been kind enough to send, and the letter you sent from Mr. Lefroy I cannot hear anything of, although repeated inquiries have been made for me at the Post Office. I am glad to hear so good an opinion of Macgillivray, as I told you at first I could not think he would act otherwise; if we succeed in getting across I shall most likely surprise him at Port Essington, should a ship be leaving for that port; drop him a line to say I am on the way. You can unpack the box and look at the specimens, and if not giving you too much trouble, perhaps you will get a tin top soldered on to make it more secure; the only thing new in the collection is the parrot I mentioned to you in a former letter, and the smaller Quadrupeds, which I think are nearly all new. I am sorry I have not been able to get you a few beetles, but the weather has been so cold and cheerless that scarcely any insects are to be found. If we succeed in reaching our destination I shall get on to Sydney as soon as possible, so that I think you may expect me in about 12 months.

Believe me, ever yours truly,

JOHN GILBERT.

P.S.—Best respects to Mrs. S.

P.S.—There is a small package of seeds enclosed in the box for Mrs. Bennett. Will you be good enough to deliver it J.G.

The letter was addressed to "Mr. F. Strange, two doors from the Wesleyan Chapel, Princes Street, Sydney," and bears stamp "General Post Office, Sydney, October 24, 1844."

Among Australiana recovered by A. H. Chisholm in England in 1936 there is a draft of a letter from Gould to Gilbert, dated August 24, 1844, in which Gould wrote: "I have written to Strange, Drummond (15) and Mr. Bennett, all of whom I hope will collect. You will, therefore, give Strange a full list of desiderata when you leave."

But Gilbert did not receive this letter, as he had left on his fatal journey with Leichhardt before it reached Sydney.

Strange himself must also have left Sydney for the north shortly after Gilbert's departure with Leichhardt, since the *Sydney Morning Herald* of November 30, 1844, gave a list of passengers who arrived the day before by the *William the Fourth* from the Clarence River, and the list includes "Mr. Strange."

A daughter, Rosa Ann, was baptised at Sydney on June 18, 1845.

Although among the letters belonging to his grandfather supplied by Mr. C. R. Strange there is none from John Gould; still there is in Gould's *Letter Book, 1840-1846* (16), a draft of a letter to Dr. George Bennett, which goes to show that Strange was eager to take up collecting on a grand scale for Gould. The letter reads: "A report has just reached London that Leichardt (*sic*), Gilbert and party have arrived at Port Essington. I fear this is too good to be true, but I do not despair of their safety, and this it is that has prevented me from acceding to Strange's solicitations to appoint him Gilbert's successor, which, of course, I could not think of doing while there is a chance of so admirable and zealous an assistant being in existence."

(15) Johnston Drummond, of Swan River Colony.

(16) In Mitchell Library, Sydney. See *Emu*, 38, 1938, 211. Footnote.

The letter is dated from London, June 1, 1846, and it was not until March 25, 1847, that Leichhardt returned to Sydney and it became known to the world that he had actually succeeded in reaching Port Essington, but with the loss of Gilbert.

From a letter from Leichhardt to Dr. Bennett (17) it would appear that, after Gilbert's death became known to Gould, some arrangement between Gould and Strange regarding collecting was reached.

To this period may, perhaps, be allotted an undated letter written by Leichhardt to R. Graham, Sydney. This letter, the existence of which appears to have hitherto been unknown, is among the documents lent to me by Mr. C. R. Strange. The letter is as follows:—

My dear Friend,—

Mr. Strange told me that "Charley" the black fellow who went with me wanted some clothing. He is staying at present at the Clarence, collecting birds for Mr. Strange, and takes, to all appearance, great care of himself. You know best what arrangements are made to meet their wants, and will be kind enough to tell Mr. Strange. May I remind you of Mr. Gilbert's tombstone?

Believe me ever to be my dear friend most sincerely.

Yours,

LUDWIG LEICHHARDT.

R. Graham, Esquire,
Sydney.

This Graham was possibly the man after whom Leichhardt had named Mount Graham. The letter tends to confirm Mr. Chisholm's assessment of Leichhardt's character—was the explorer trying to pass on to some one else the responsibility of doing something for Charley? The same may be suggested about the tombstone to Gilbert. Why the letter should nowadays be among relics of Frederick Strange is obscure.

VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND IN H.M.S. ACHERON.

H.M.S. Acheron, under the command of Captain Lort Stokes, was engaged on a survey of the coasts of New Zealand from 1847 to 1851, and Strange was in the vessel during a portion of the period, leaving Sydney in the vessel as a passenger on October 30, 1848. Before actually going to New Zealand, Strange appears to have had some contact with that country. At the meeting of the Zoological Society of London, held on April 13, 1847, John Gould (18) read a letter from Strange containing "Notes on some rare birds of New Zealand and Australia." In the letter Strange gave some notes on *Strigops habroptilus* and *Apteryx australis*, as well as on the Australian bird *Scythrops novaehollandiae*.

From the remarks of Strange regarding the two New Zealand birds, it would appear that he had obtained his information from sealers who had put in to Sydney. The information that a second, larger, species of Kiwi

(17) In Mitchell Library MS., No. C.161. See also *Emu*, as above, p. 151.

(18) *Proceedings*, Part XV., 1847, 50-51; reprinted in an article on the Birds of New Zealand in the *New Zealand Journal* of May 18, 1850, 118-119.

occurred on South Island was correct, but it was not confirmed until 1871, when Potts described *Apteryx haasti* from two specimens received at the Canterbury Museum from Westland. Meanwhile, Strange, himself, had obtained a new species, *Apteryx oweni* Gould—probably from a sealer—and a note recording the fact has been entered by him in his *Catalogue*. An entry, covering a page, gives a description of the species, together with a note "Mem. sent to England by me in the ship *Hamlet* in the latter part of 1847.—F. Strange."

The bird was described by Gould before the Zoological Society of London on June 8 (19), "On a New Species of *Apteryx*." "The bird I am now about to describe has just arrived from New Zealand by way of Sydney, but unaccompanied by any information as to the locality in which it was procured, or any particulars of its habits and economy."

In the *Birds of Australia* Gould wrote that *Apteryx owenii* "formed part of a small collection of New Zealand birds, but from which of the islands they had been procured was uncertain; I have some reason to believe that they were from the South Island." In his *Handbook*, however, he acknowledged his debt to Strange when he wrote: "The specimen from which my description was taken was sent to me by Mr. F. Strange, of Sydney, in 1850." (20). From Strange's letter to the Rev. Richard Taylor, it is apparent that the specimen came from the South Island. (21).

No connected account of the survey of the coasts of New Zealand by the *Acheron* has been published, and the writer has encountered difficulty in tracing the itinerary of the voyage. The ship, apparently, went first from Sydney to Auckland, and from there to Akaroa in February, 1849, where the nautical survey of Banks Peninsula was begun.

Between March 4 and 10 Strange made a trip up the Waimakariri River, and on his return to Sydney he published an account of the trip in the *Supplement to the Sydney Morning Herald* of January 26, 1850. (22).

The article is entitled "Port Cooper. Narrative of a trip 64 miles to the west of Port Cooper."

Quitting the ship on 10 days' leave of absence on March 4, 1849, Strange, with a small party, the personnel of which he does not state, but which, from the fact that they interested themselves in trapping rats, were probably Maories, reached the station of the Deans Brothers. Strange records having collected a Grebe (*Podiceps*) here.

The next day he continued his march, during which he saw a hawk (*Circus*), quail (*Coturnix*), and a gull (*Larus*). On the 6th the party continued up the river bank, and Strange records seeing a species of *Helix*, "but they were dead from the recent fires," and a flock of Black Duck, *Anas superciliosa*. He shot a pair of Paradise Ducks, *Casarca variegata*, "the putangitangi of the natives." The next day he went on and camped

(19) *Proceedings*, Part XV., 1847, 93-94.

(20) Appendix to Vol. 2, 573. Here is another example of Gould's well known carelessness regarding dates.

(21) See *post*. Strange uses the then current name of "Middle" Island for South Island.

(22) This account was reprinted in the *New Zealand Journal* of 1850, and it also appears in the pamphlet, "Literary Notices, Etc."

at night "about three miles from the foot of the Snowy Mountains." His men made rat-traps and caught many Norway rats (*Mus rattus*). "This species appears to have over-run all parts of New Zealand, and as it destroys the *kiore*, or native rat, that species will soon be extinct. I learned from a native at Port Cooper that a few years ago the natives used to have their regular *kiore* hunting grounds, where they used to kill them by thousands. The only one I obtained during my stay at New Zealand was given me by the Rev. Mr. Butts, at Nelson." "In crossing over the plains to-day, in a place where there was an extensive dip of the country for many miles, I saw numbers of the bones of the *dinornis*, but mostly broken." He records getting "two new species of helix, and some fine insects" at this camp, seeing for the first time the Orange-wattled Crow, *Callaeas cinerea*, and finding the Parson Bird (Tui) *Prosthemadera novae-seelandiae* plentiful. At night he heard the plaintive call of the Woodhen, "*Ocydromus australis*," or "weka" of the natives. This Woodhen was probably the form *Gallirallus hectori*, Buff Woodhen. According to Oliver (*New Zealand Birds*, 1930, 335), Strange obtained a specimen, or specimens, on the shores of Lyttelton Harbour "about 1850." On the 8th, after a stiff climb, Strange reached the summit of a high snow peak and got a view of wild and broken country. Without stating what they were he says he was disappointed in not getting the specimens he was in search of, so descended to his previous camp, the only "new" things obtained during the day being two species of *Lepidoptera*, three species of *Helix*, and a fern. On the 9th, continuing his return journey, his track passed through a gorge between two high mountains which he named Mount Acheron and Mount Stanley, "after the late Bishop of Norwich." Do these names persist to-day? He records finding a nest and five eggs of the Quail.

The next day he again reached the Deans Station. In the Hocken Library there is a collection of letters written by members of the Deans family. In one there is mention that "the exploring party have now returned."

On getting back to the Deans Station, Strange was annoyed to learn that Captain Stokes was leaving the ship for a 16-day trip to Mount Grey. He considered that he himself "could have reached the west side of the island in three days from the point from which I returned, and have ample time to spend a week on the west coast," had he not been on limited leave of absence, apparently due to the intended sailing of the vessel. He little knew the difficulties he would have encountered had he gone on.

Strange, however, joined Stokes on the 16-day trip to Mount Grey, catching up with the party at Riccarton. (23). In the newspaper article he mentions meeting with the flag, *Typha augustifolia*, or "raupo," and the native flax, *Phormium tenax*. He records seeing in most of the streams of the Middle Island five species of ducks, and notes that the Paradise Duck, *Casarca variegata*, was to be found chiefly on the plains and shingle beds of the larger rivers, while the "Red Bill," *Porphyrio melanotus*, or "pukeko" was to be found in all the swamps of the plains. He also mentions the wild pig, "mostly black, with a long tail and large tuft at the end," being plentiful and delicious eating.

After charting the east coast of Otago the *Acheron* went north and

(23) W. G. McClymont, *The Exploration of New Zealand*, 1940.

charted the coasts of Cook Strait during May, 1849. At Tasman Bay, Strange collected a specimen of the Brown Creeper, *Finschia novae-seelandiae*, and gave it to Captain Stokes, who sent it on to the British Museum. (24).

From Cook Strait the *Acheron* went to Sydney to refit, arriving on November 1st, and Strange left the vessel. (25).

In the Mitchell Library, Sydney, there is an autograph letter from Strange dated from Sydney, February 24, 1850. The addressee, "R. Taylor, Esq.," is almost certainly the well-known New Zealand naturalist, the Rev. Richard Taylor, M.A., F.G.S., of Wanganui, he who discovered the bones and skull of the extinct *Aptornis*, which Professor Richard Owen named *Aptornis defossor*, and the author of *Te ika a Maui or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, 1855

The letter is as follows:—

My Dear Sir,—

On my return to Sydney from my trip to the north of Moreton Bay I found your note of August 27, 1849, and where you kindly offer to get me some of the kiwi *Apteryx australis* and asking me in what state I want them.

And now, dear, sir, this is the state I want the species in from your neighbourhood is thus, say six, in skins to consist of two females, two males and two young ones, and two adults, in brine, male and female, and some eggs if they can be got.

I have now some *Apteryx* from the Middle Island, one species of which I sent home to England some three years ago. It is called after Professor Owen, *Apteryx Owenii*. I am also anxious to get any species of land shells *Helix* or fresh water *Unio* from Wanganui. As I made a large collection in the *Acheron*, say about 100 species, and I give New Zealand about 360 altogether. But the finest species will be found down at the North Cape and, though I had no opportunity to go, and anything you can get send it on to Mr. Lyon, agent at Wellington, and he will forward it on to Sydney.

And, believe me, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

F. STRANGE, Naturalist.

To R. Taylor, Esq.,—

If you are fond of shells I will make up a collection of the New Zealand L.F. land shells and forward you down, or our Australian shell land or marine, if you write me that you would like to get them—F.S.

The foregoing letter discloses that, prior to writing it, Strange had just returned from a trip to the north of Moreton Bay, so he must have set off for those regions very shortly after his return to Sydney from New Zealand. Entries in the *Catalogue* disclose that Strange was also in the Moreton Bay area between May 24, 1850, and July 28, 1851.

(24) W. R. B. Oliver, *New Zealand Birds*, 1930, 477.

(25) The *Sydney Morning Herald* of November 2, 1849, gives information of the arrival of the vessel, and states that she "had two living kiwis on board."

A daughter, Martha Louisa, was baptised in Sydney on December 1, 1850.

VISIT TO ENGLAND.

In 1852, Strange returned to England, accompanied by his family. They left Sydney in March, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* of March 9 gave his departure some publicity by publishing the following:—

“NATURAL HISTORY.

“To the lovers of natural history in this colony, it will be by no means surprising to see the name of Mr. Strange, formerly of Hunter Street, associated with new discoveries in the pursuit to which he has devoted himself. Mr. Strange has taken his passage on board the *Viemera*, for England, carrying with him a most interesting collection of specimens, collected by him during the last eighteen months in the northern districts of the colony. The district over which Mr. Strange’s researches extend ranges from Mount Warning on the south to Briebie’s Island on the north. The information which will be afforded by the collection of specimens will be highly useful to the cause of science, and at the same time will, no doubt, be peculiarly acceptable to the English public, as developing, by analogy, the various capabilities of this colony. Mr. Strange has a very elegant collection of ferns, amounting to sixty or seventy in number, many of which have been pronounced new. A splendid collection of crustaceous animals, including a large number of novel and interesting specimens. His entomological collection, too, presents much of beauty and interest, particularly exhibiting those species known to the naturalist in Africa and Asia, which inhabit the northern parts of this continent. Mr. Strange, we believe, intends to make arrangements to return to prosecute his researches in this colony, and we heartily wish success to so industrious a collector.” (26).

On Strange’s arrival in England, the *London Morning Advertiser* also gave him some publicity by publishing an account of him in the issue of June 24, 1852:—

“Mr. Frederick Strange, the naturalist, who is a native of Aylsham, in Norfolk, and who left this country several years ago for Australia, has just arrived in England from Sydney, New South Wales, per the *Viemera*, in ninety-four days, with a most valuable collection of specimens of natural history. Many of the botanical and entomological specimens are entirely new to the scientific world; and although the collection is so extensive, it has by no means been acquired without an immense amount of fatigue, danger, and perseverance, combined with ability and talent, in the selection, many of them hitherto unknown.

“They are the accumulation of the last three years’ research; the tract of country explored has ranged in one direction from Mount Warning, on the south to Briebie’s Island on the north of the colony, likewise over a considerable portion of New Zealand. Mr. Strange has been a resident in Sydney, South Australia, Moreton Bay, etc., for a number of years, but previous to the final adoption of his home in the New World, he

(26) Reprinted in “Literary Notices of the late Frederick Strange, Naturalist.”

embarked in the third vessel which left the shores of England, in order to the formation of a new settlement in South Australia, where he remained twelve months prosecuting his labours in natural history, botany and in acquiring information relating to the resources of the colony.

"At this time he became acquainted with Mr. J. Gould, the celebrated ornithologist, who was engaged collecting materials for his admirable work on the 'Birds of Australia.' In the latter part of this year, 1839, he was engaged upon an expedition with Captain Sturt and Commander Pullen (who is now, or was recently, engaged for the search for Sir John Franklin) to explore the country north of the north-east angle of the Murray, during which the entire party nearly perished, being compelled to bleed their horses to quench their thirst, on account of the entire want of water. A very advantageous location being offered him in New South Wales, he left South Australia in 1841, and examined all the country from Cape Howe to Wide Bay, about 700 miles of the coast, and upon his return he took a nine (27) months' cruise in Her Majesty's ship *Acheron*, during which he visited Wellington, Auckland and the Canterbury Settlement. It may be remarked that he was the first white man who made the attempt to cross the Middle Island to the western coast of New Zealand. In his collection he has brought with him the only living specimen in Europe of the Gigantic Water Lily (*Nymphaeae gigantea*) (28), so elegantly described in the May number of Sir Wm. Jackson Hooker's botanical work." (29).

Amongst Frederick Strange's correspondence, made available by Mr. C. R. Strange, is an agreement drawn up at Norwich on September 17, 1852, by which ". . . Frederick Strange, of Australia, in consideration of the sum of one hundred pounds to be paid to him by John Thorold doth agree with the said John Thorold to divide equally with him all the profits for one year from the commencement of their operations; in whatever they may undertake on their arrival in Australia—fifty pounds of the said sum to be paid on or before the twenty-first of October next, and the remaining fifty pounds to be paid from the said John Thorold's share of profits, at the expiration of six months from the commencement of their operations."

The agreement was signed by John S. Thorold (30) and F. Strange, and witnessed by Trivet Allcock.

Just before Strange left England, the following note, communicated by Mr. S. Stevens, appeared in the *Zoologist*, Vol. 10, 1852:—

(27) Actually exactly twelve months.

(28) Bot. Mag., t. 4647. "Several cultivators" in England had seed early in 1852 (Maiden, *Proc. Roy. Soc. N.S.W.*, 1908).

(29) *The Kilmarnock Journal* of the same date, and the *Norwich Mercury* of June 26, published what are virtually copies of the London article. Publication by the *Norwich Mercury* is understandable, as Strange was a Norfolk man, but the reason why the Scottish paper printed the account is obscure.

(30) John Thorold accompanied Strange back to Australia. There was, in 1855, a Richard Thorold, of Weelsby House, Lincolnshire, who had some connection with Australia, as his nephew, A. Grant, sent him two live emus from Australia. See *Naturalist*, 1855; 161-162. H. Thorold, Esq., was a subscriber to Gould's *Birds of Australia*.

"Mr. F. Strange,—This well-known Australian naturalist, who has been in England for some months, leaves in a few days for his old haunts, to further investigate the natural history of that great continent. Judging from what he has already done, and from his great zeal and activity, we may fully expect to receive many more novelties from him, which I will duly report, as they arrive, in the pages of the *Zoologist*."

Strange left London on October 27, 1852 (Plymouth, November 9, and Cape of Good Hope, February 7), on the *Resolute*. According to an entry in the family Bible, a son (31) was born on board whilst the ship was off the Cape on January 23, 1853. The arrival of the ship at Sydney on March 21, after a passage lasting 133 days, is recorded in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and Mr. and Mrs. Strange and four children are listed as among the passengers.

Immediately on his return to Australia, no doubt, Strange busied himself in collecting and in supplying the wants of those naturalists with whom he had come into contact during his stay in England. One of these was the well-known Norwich banker and ornithologist, J. H. Gurney, as among Strange's correspondence is the following letter:—

London, February 13, 1854.

Dear Sir,—

I duly received your acceptable letter, newspapers, and a box of skins, together with invoice for the same, amounting to £20/9/6, for which amount I have the pleasure of enclosing a letter of credit in your favour on Messrs. Smith, Croft & Co., of Sydney—duplicate of which I intend also sending out a short time hence in case this should not come to hand in due course—I shall be very happy to receive the additional collection which you expect to send—including the nest and eggs of the *Origma*—I conclude by your having some expectation of being able to send a *Notornis*, that you think of visiting New Zealand, in which case I trust you may obtain not only the *Notornis* but also many other of the little known birds of that country—your last skins arrived in excellent order and without injury—I am especially engaged just now in examining the different species and plumages of the birds of prey both diurnal and noct(urnal) and would therefore especially call your attention to sending me birds of that order—I also shall be glad of shore birds and water birds as well as inland birds—but especially "birds of prey."

The letter was addressed to Mr. Frederick Strange, Naturalist, Norfolk Cottage, North Shore, Sydney, and bears a readdress to "Storekeeper," Sussex Street, Sydney.

There is, at present, little information regarding Strange's movements subsequent to his return to Australia. It is known, however, that he engaged in organising a trading and collecting expedition to the islands to the north-east, and a vessel, the ketch *Vision*, was chartered or purchased. Strange, at Sydney, on August 31, 1854, entered into an agreement with Joseph C. Rossiter and . . . Gordon Korff, whereby the three obtained interests, to the extent of 40, 8, and 16 sixty-fourths respectively, in a voyage to collect tortoise shell, oil, or any other produce, and to trade and

(31) Baptised, Frederick Resolute, at the Old St. Thomas' Church, in North Sydney. Later to be Mayor of Mosman.

barter and to share equally in the proposition. As Strange was to proceed himself in the vessel and superintend the trading he was to receive a bonus of ten per cent. of the realised amount of trade and collections. The agreement, which is among the papers lent by Mr. C. R. Strange, was witnessed by John Korff. The following letter appears to show that Strange had written to England in an effort to get purchasers for any natural history specimens that might be collected on the expedition. Hugh Cuming was, of course, the well-known conchologist and London natural history dealer. The letter addressed, "Mr. Frederick Strange, Naturalist, 8 Bridge Street, Sydney," was endorsed "Favoured by Frederic Cuming." In an account of the son, Frederick Resolute Strange, in the local press, written when he became Mayor of Mosman, "8 Bridge Street," was described as a "quaint cottage, which stands high up on a rock on the corner of Princes Street and Crescent Street."

My Dear Sir,—

As I am about writing to my nephew Frederic Cuming, who will be in Sydney by the time this arrives, I thought I would write you again in answer to yours of July 14, 1854. Mr. . . . ? has applied to me to become a subscriber to your expedition, and I have put my name down of [for] one share of £50 for shells only, and I presume you have not started on it yet, as I hear from Mr. Stevens that you was at Moreton Bay. I hope you will get a few good things there, for it appears to me to be a fertile place and I think that if anyone can get anything good you are the man to do it and [k]now how to take care of them when you have got them. I got a few good things from Mr. Macgillivray from New Ireland, but Mr. Stevens received a quantity of the same kind of things from Sydney which lowered the value of them a good bit and I find there is a good many of the same things in other hands. Those were very pretty *Bulimi* and *Helix* and the straw coloured *Bulimi* has been described by Dr. Fieffer as *B. Strangei* and the *Helix* as *Eddystonensis* Reeve. You see, I do not forget you.

I received the money from Mr. Stevens for the bulbs sold Sir J.[torn]h Paxton. I have mislaid his letter wherein he gave it a name; everyone that purchased the bulbs have not succeeded in flowering of it, or even making it give out its foliage, except Mr. Van Houtte, of Ghent, who bought at Stevens auction one of the smallest bulbs and he has caused it to flower from the very smallest bulb of the lot. I was at Ghent, in August last, when it was in flower; it was of a beautiful light sky blue and about $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, and by the account of Dr. Lindley, in the Botanical Register, it was about 12 inches over, and the accounts sent home by Mr. Bidwell. Luckily for you and me I have never been troubled with any more complaints from those gentlemen, who purchased them in England, as I hear from parties that they have all died, but I have been afraid to ask the parties themselves fearing they might make a claim.

I fear you will not get any plants from Standish Noble, for he and I are not freinds (*sic*) now, for he has threatened to bring an action against me for selling him things that would not grow, but he has been wise enough not to do it.

In the strictest confidence I write to ask you what Mr. Macgillivray is about in Sydney when there, for he has not sent home only one quarterly bill of £62/10/- since he has been away now nearly three years, and I have been supporting his wife by allowing her £6 a month besides other

incidental expenses. I fitted him out and with what I paid for him besides he now owes me £192, deducting the bill of £62/10/-, and what I have sold on his account, say £80 odd, what I have sold of his things he has sent me therefore by the time the letter which I am going to write him reaches him he will owe me more than £200, and if he does not send me money immediately he comes back to Sydney again I shall not advance his wife anything more and she and the children must go to the workhouse. You can show him this letter, but on no account let anyone know it besides himself. All what I have done has been for the sake of his wife and children. Their pitiable state makes my heart grieve for them. I have not seen Mr. Macgillivray but thrice before I got him out of all his troubles and I have not had one-tenth part of the intercourse with him as I have had with you and I shall feel much obliged by letting me know the result of your communication with him. (32).

Cannot you get some seeds from the Island of Pines of that sort you had in your case when you came home . . . which I sold for 1/6 each; there were two or three growing in the case which I sold for £2 each; if Mr. Macgillivray had sent home a lot of these it would have paid all he owes me and more besides, but he did not send one when at the Isle of Pines. They must be packed in small boxes. One foot square and two feet long, one half seeds and the other half pure fresh water sand where a drop of salt water never reaches it. I hope you will see Frederic during the vessel's stay in Sydney.

With my kindest regards to your wife and great success in your undertaking.

I remain,

My dear sir,

Yours most sincerely,

H. CUMING. (33).

Strange was dead before that letter even left England and, doubtless, Frederic Cuming delivered it to the widow.

The *Vision* sailed from Sydney on September 4, 1854, and from Moreton Bay on the 29th, with the following on board: Strange as owner, with Richard Spinks as his assistant, George Elphinstone Vernon Maitland (master), William Spurling (mate), Geoffrey Geary and William Vann (seamen), and Henry Gittings (cook and steward). On board also was Walter Hill, who was described as a botanist, and who later became Colonial Botanist at Brisbane. It is not clear who started from Sydney and who joined the vessel at Moreton Bay, but a native named Deliapy was picked up at Moreton Island.

The *Vision*, after calling at a small island off Cape Capricorn, anchored off the Second Percy Island on October 14. Strange, Hill, Spinks, and the black went ashore the same day, but after remaining on the island for one

(32) This reference to John Macgillivray should be read in conjunction with notes regarding him made by T. Iredale at the conclusion of the latter's paper, "The last letters of John Macgillivray," in the *Australian Zoologist*, 9, 1937, p. 40.

(33) (1791-1865), F.R.S., F.L.S. The letter is dated February 1, 1855.

hour returned to the ship. The next morning Strange, Hill, Spurling, Spinks, Gittings, and black went ashore again, unarmed, except that Strange had a double-barrelled gun. The gun proved an insufficient protection and Strange, Spurling, Spinks, and Gittings were killed by blacks.

Accounts of the murders appeared in the *Moreton Bay Free Press*, November 21, 1854, *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 21, and December 2, 1854, and *Empire*, November 21 and 23, 1854.

It is proposed to publish later the field-notes on birds entered by Strange in his *Catalogue*, but it may here be placed on record that he was the collector of the type-specimens of *Strix tenebricosa* Gould, 1845, Sooty Owl; *Podargus plumiferus* Gould, 1846, Plumed Frogmouth; *Menura alberti* Bonaparte, 1850, Albert Lyrebird; *Eopsaltria capito* Gould, 1854, Pale-yellow Robin; *Colluricincla rufogaster* Gould, 1845, Rufous Shrike-Thrush; *Ptilotis fasciogularis* Gould, 1854, Mangrove Honey-eater.

It is also proposed to publish an account of the mammals collected by him in Australia.

In conclusion, I desire to express my thanks to Mr. J. D. Somerville, of Adelaide, who has assisted me greatly in tracing the history of Strange in South Australia, and to Mr. C. R. Strange for kindly entrusting to me for perusal his grandfather's personal papers.

REVIEW.

Miss Joyce Allan, who has contributed to this journal (vii., 87 and viii., 261) two notable papers on the Nudibranchs—those beautifully coloured Sea-slugs of our coastlines—has recently produced, in the Records of the Australian Museum (xxi., 433), a further paper, "Nudibranchia from the Clarence River Heads, North Coast, New South Wales," which will interest our marine zoologists.

More than 30 species are discussed, some of them new to Australia. Many of them have a relationship with New Caledonia and other tropical places and occasionally stray down to Sydney Harbour. There are three plates of detailed illustrations and one new species, *Archidoris cameroni*, is named.



Frederick Strange—after Maiden.



Railway cutting occupied by the huge colony of
Parasphcodes fulviventris (Fr.).
Tarlton Rayment, photo.